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GENERAL ASSEMBLY

PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 8th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Wednesday, 23 September 1992, at 10 a.m.

President:	Mr. GANEV	(Bulgaria)
later:	Mr. KALPAGE (Vice President)	(Sri Lanka)

- Address by Mr. Levon Ter-Petrossian, President of the Republic of Armenia

- Address by Mr. Alfredo Felix Cristiani Burkard, President of the Republic of El Salvador

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- General debate [9] (continued)

Statements made by

Mr. Dumas (France)
Mr. Qian Qichen (China)
Mr. Kinkel (Germany)
Mr. Kravchanka (Belarus)

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

ADDRESS BY MR. LEVON TER-PETROSSIAN, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA

The PRESIDENT: The Assembly will first hear an address by the President of the Republic of Armenia.

Mr. Levon Ter-Petrossian, President of the Republic of Armenia, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations the President of the Republic of Armenia, His Excellency Mr. Levon Ter-Petrossian, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President TER-PETROSSIAN (interpretation from French): At the outset, on behalf of the Republic of Armenia and the Armenian people, I wish to express my gratitude for the support of the General Assembly for our request to be admitted to membership of the United Nations.

I wish also to congratulate you, Ambassador Ganev, on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session.

Today is the first anniversary of Armenia's declaration of independence, so it is a signal honour for me to be addressing the General Assembly. The past year has been significant both for a newly independent Armenia as well as for the international community at large. Our Government, which was formed as a result of free elections, has continued its policy of democratization, economic liberalization and the creation of a State of law. The Parliament of Armenia has voted in favour of freedom of conscience, freedom of religion and freedom of the press. It has instituted a multiparty system and has acceded to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and all international conventions on human rights.

(President Ter-Petrossian)

In this relatively short time, Armenia has succeeded in carrying out agrarian reform by distributing to the people 80 per cent of its agricultural lands. Moreover, Parliament has already enacted the laws underlying denationalization, and has begun the privatization of small and medium-sized enterprises and of certain service industries. In addition, bills relating to reform of the banking system, credit, finance, the budget and communications are already before Parliament with a view to creating the legal infrastructure necessary for a market economy.

The entrenchment of democracy and economic reform are taking place against the backdrop of blockades, skyrocketing unemployment, free-falling standards of living and an acute energy crisis. That energy crisis, which is the main reason for the drop in national production, is the result not only of regional blocades but also of the closing of our nuclear power plant for safety and ecological reasons.

In those conditions the Government must still devote a major portion of its resources to rebuilding the Spitak region, hit hard by the earthquake of 7 December 1988.

Democratization and independence have had a no less fundamental impact on the new direction of the foreign policy of the Republic of Armenia, which is based on two principles:

First, the security of the State and the people hinges on normalized relations with all of our neighbours, on a negotiated solution to conflicts, and on strengthened regional economic cooperation. All of this should lead to the establishment of a system of regional collective security.

(President Ter-Petrossian)

Secondly, Armenia is ready to participate in any constructive process that would guarantee the development of international economic and political cooperation and the strengthening of regional stability. That is why Armenia pursues an active policy in the Commonwealth of Independent States, in the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) and in the Black Sea economic cooperation process. Armenia wishes also to play a role in economic cooperation and a system of collective security in the Middle East.

On the basis of those two principles, Armenia has already signed bilateral agreements with two of its neighbours: Georgia and Iran. We have also begun serious negotiations with Turkey on normalized relations with that country. In the light of the respective interests of our two countries and sharing a concern to restore regional stability, Armenia is convinced that it will be able to achieve that goal on the basis of international law.

With equal persistence, Armenia has been pursuing that policy with respect to its fourth neighbour, Azerbaijan. Armenia harbours no territorial claims with respect to Azerbaijan, but we insist that the people of Nagorno-Karabakh not be relegated to the status of ethnic minority, that they not be denied their right of self-determination and that this population not be sacrificed on the altar of the principle of territorial integrity.

(President Ter-Petrossian)

It is indeed high time that the security of the people of Nagorno-Karabakh should be ensured with sound international guarantees.

Armenia is very pleased to note that the position which we have been defending since the outset of the conflict is being increasingly taken into account and even endorsed by other States involved. For us it is clear that the cease-fire is the necessary initial stage in advancing towards a solution to this question. Negotiations must follow, first between Azerbaijan and Nagorno-Karabakh on the status of Nagorno-Karabakh, together with the necessary international guarantees, and, secondly, between Azerbaijan and Armenia to resolve questions arising from the conflict.

In order to bring about the required cease-fire, Armenia has welcomed all proposals made to date and thus Armenia, like the parliament of Nagorno-Karabakh, has just given an unconditional and favourable response to the cease-fire appeal made by the President of the Minsk group of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE). Unfortunately, Azerbaijan did not adopt the same position.

At all events, Armenia is prepared to make a positive contribution in talks with Azerbaijan in the hope that the attention which we give to the well-being of all the peoples in the region will lead us to peace and stability. It is not too early to declare that the United Nations is in a position to assist in achieving these ends.

As the Armenian people acceded to democracy and independence by constitutional and non-violent means, independent Armenia is moving towards peace and justice in the context of strict respect for international law.

Similarly, in accord with the two principles I referred to previously, Armenia has attempted to transform the burden of history into an historic

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opportunity to lay bare the historic roots that unite it with this region, to restore the communality of culture which connects it with the peoples of this region, and to transform ethnic and religious differences into a source of wealth conducive to resolving all the problems besetting our common house.

This year was equally significant for the United Nations. The Republic of Armenia would like to congratulate the Secretary-General of the United Nations on his report entitled "An Agenda for Peace" (A/47/277). The report contains a number of constructive proposals to which I am sure the United Nations will give the closest scrutiny.

Whether it be as a Member of the United Nations or as a party involved in a regional conflict, Armenia is very interested in proposals to create specific machinery for the implementation of Article 43 of the United Nations Charter. The creation of peace-keeping and cease-fire forces, binding arbitration for conflicts, and encouraging active recourse to the International Court of Justice under the aegis of the United Nations would be a major success for the international community and the new world order. Armenia realizes that other proposals to change the structures of the United Nations also contain constructive ideas which, if they were acted upon, would make it possible more surely to achieve collective security and the concepts of the new world order in the United Nations today.

Armenia has acquired some experience in the creation of new structures while the former ones are gradually disintegrating. Accordingly, we are fully prepared to participate in the creation and implementation of a new world

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order so as to avoid inertia, a lack of will or imagination, or simply a lack of vigilance and cause a return to the old system which attempted to impose solutions on peoples by involving them in even more bloody conflicts.

In the new world order States should be able to shoulder the problems of their neighbours regardless of considerations of race, religion or ideology.

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Armenia for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Levon Ter-Petrossian, President of the Republic of Armenia, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

ADDRESS BY MR. ALFREDO FELIX CRISTIANI BURKARD, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF EL SALVADOR

The PRESIDENT: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of El Salvador.

Mr. Alfredo Felix Cristiani Burkard, President of the Republic of El Salvador, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations the President of the Republic of El Salvador, His Excellency Mr. Alfredo Felix Cristiani Burkard, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President CRISTIANI BURKARD (interpretation from Spanish): I should like my first words in this great forum of the world Organization to be an expression of our great pleasure at the unanimous decision of the Assembly that you, Sir, should be the one to guide and direct its important work at the forty-seventh session. Your brilliant record, your undeniable personal prestige, your dedication to the ideals that inspire our Organization and the fact that you come from a part of the world where impressive positive changes are taking place are all signs that the United Nations, with determination and enthusiasm, is in step with the great phenomenon of our era: the reaffirmation of freedom as the driving force of history.

We also recognize the splendid job done by your predecessor, Ambassador Samir Shihabi, who carried out his delicate task during a period of important national challenges which our Organization met with determination and with a sense of service.

The presence of a new Secretary-General has given the period since the last session of the General Assembly a very special significance. This is an excellent opportunity to express again to the world our profound appreciation

(President Cristiani Burkard)

to the former Secretary-General, Javier Perez de Cuellar, not only because of the fine overall task he accomplished but more specifically because of his selflessness and his effective participation in achieving the final peace agreement in El Salvador, which he, his representatives and associates worked towards with such effort and conviction. We are also moved when we recall how that agreement was reached at the last minute of the Secretary-General's mandate, and therewith the peace of El Salvador was linked with the name of an illustrious Latin American of universal stature.

When the new Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, assumed his functions, we immediately realized that his unequivocal intention would be to continue to support, with his characteristic wisdom and experience, the difficult and exemplary process in which we Salvadorans are involved. This encourages us to remain faithful to past commitments and to believe that the new dynamics in El Salvador are irreversible, provided that we have the support of the international community.

On a number of occasions, and specifically in our message of 16 January 1992 during the signing ceremony in Chapultepec, Mexico, we have said that peace in El Salvador is not just a matter of restoring normal conditions - those that prevailed before the conflict - but of establishing peace of a new kind, unprecedented in our country. Besides being a civilized way of ending armed confrontation, peace is a complex series of commitments aimed at consolidating democracy in El Salvador. It is a means of providing more opportunities for pluralist participation, a way to create socio-political conditions for stability based on democratic legality among all existing sectors and groups of society.

(President Cristiani Burkard)

This agreement, termed by the United Nations a unique agreement, is being implemented with the close cooperation of El Salvador and the international community. Conditions specific to that country, together with world events and in particular the end of the cold war, made it possible to conclude the conflict in El Salvador in a satisfactory manner. And at this point we should like to stress an issue that is of supreme importance: the subject of democracy.

We have no doubt whatsoever that it has been the existence of the democratic process in our country that has made it possible for the war to gradually lose its historic vigour. It also made it possible to arrive at a kind of solution that appears to be permanent, one that will permit the building of peace, which is of course a long-term effort. The peace agreement is sound and convincing to the Salvadorian people and to the entire world as well, because it empowers and expands democracy. We would repeat here in this great forum, as we have done on the three earlier occasions on which we had the privilege of speaking the truth as we see it from this rostrum, that our main challenge and our most significant task is to serve the gradual democratization of El Salvador. In this manner we hope to contribute to security, internal progress and the stability of Central America.

Our country has made major sacrifices and efforts to establish and safeguard the democratic process. Our Government - and we say this with legitimate satisfaction - has contributed boldly and relentlessly to the consolidation of democracy in El Salvador. We will not waver even for a moment, as we have recently demonstrated, in ensuring that this process moves forward in the future for the benefit of an entire population that has, as a

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result of great suffering, earned a stable peace, secure development and a better future.

Our country's institutions have contributed greatly to all of these efforts, but we should like to emphasize that two in particular have given us their determined support: our political institution, the Nationalist Republican Alliance, and the armed forces of El Salvador. They have given us, and continue to do so, fundamental support in ensuring that democracy in El Salvador becomes a reality and peace a concrete fact. We shall not tire of saying that the people of El Salvador are the major protagonists in this new and historic stage. All of us are involved in building an integrated society, one that can jointly settle its differences and realize its aspirations. In order to achieve this, peace must be the first priority. Without a stable peace, freedoms could become fragile and progress uncertain.

We consider it essential that this process be carried out in accordance with the terms of the peace agreement. Significant progress has been made in implementing the corresponding commitments, starting on 16 January. Many difficulties have arisen - technical, logistical, financial and political - but, with the efficient support of the United Nations, we are now in a position to conclude the crucial stage of the cessation of armed confrontation on 31 October as scheduled.

On this solemn occasion we appeal to the international community represented here, hoping that they will support our decision and our determination to scrupulously respect this deadline. At that point, the military structure of the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) will come to an end, because the Government has been fulfilling its various

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political and constitutional commitments and will continue to do so in a serious and responsible manner. We should like to move to another important stage of the process, in which political freedom will determine the rate of progress in our country, in all walks of life.

(President Cristiani Burkard)

Our peace process, because of its characteristics and its potential, stands as an example for others to follow. We are extremely pleased that in El Salvador unprecedented events of great importance are taking place. The role and performance of the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador (ONUSAL) is one of those phenomena, and it is in keeping with the new role that falls to the United Nations in the post-cold-war period.

In this connection, we fully support the concepts contained in the report of the Secretary-General prepared in keeping with the statement agreed upon on 31 January of this year at the summit meeting of the Security Council. That document, entitled "An Agenda for Peace", reflects the experience accumulated by the Organization in the area of preventive diplomacy and the establishment, maintenance and consolidation of peace. That experience is now guiding the Organization. The case of El Salvador is one of the clearest and most persuasive examples of the fact that our Organization is fulfilling the responsibilities required of it by the events and dynamics of the times, and it is doing so efficiently and opportunely within this new, increasingly interlinked world where there is a growing sense of globalism.

In this connection, we emphasize that there is a strong trend not only towards economic globalism but also towards democratization and the safeguarding of peace throughout the world. Today no one is immune to the conflicts that used to be called peripheral. The distortions that existed until not so long ago, due to the permanent tension reigning in an ideologically bipolar world, have given way to a much more realistic, humanitarian approach to the world's problems: understanding the world as an integrated zone of peace where even the most local conflict is now a concern of the international community, which is speedily developing the ways and

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means of creating effective cooperation in peacemaking efforts, without resorting to the barbarism of intervention or the arrogance of unilateral operations. The concept of the international policeman is, fortunately, being replaced by something much more modern and constructive: joint agreement to face acute crises that jeopardize international peace and stability.

This brings us back to the concept of democracy, which is the key topic of our time. In this regard, we fully associate ourselves with the remarks of the Secretary-General in his aforementioned report:

> "Democracy within the family of nations means the application of its principles within the world Organization itself. This requires the fullest consultation, participation and engagement of all States, large and small, in the work of the Organization. All organs of the United Nations must be accorded, and play, their full and proper role so that the trust of all nations and peoples will be retained and deserved. The principles of the Charter must be applied consistently, not selectively, for if the perception should be of the latter, trust will wane and with it the moral authority which is the greatest and most unique quality of that instrument. Democracy at all levels is essential to attain peace for a new era of prosperity and justice." (A/47/277, para. 82)

We Salvadorians, immersed as we are in a process of radical, conscious transformation of our society, make an unequivocal declaration of trust in the United Nations by placing in its hands the vital task of verifying all peace agreements. It is no exaggeration to say that few countries have placed such confidence in the Organization. This shows our great desire for peace and democracy, and at the same time it makes both us and the Organization responsible. In other words, in the process in El Salvador we are all gaining

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valuable experience, and we have no doubt that our original approach to overcoming conflict and seeing to it that the solution serves as a political and social platform for the future makes this one of the most important landmarks in the process of transition that is taking place in the international community today.

Salvadorians cannot afford to vacillate, nor can we be found wanting in this great effort to heal our country of the deep-rooted bad habits of the past and of the ravages of war. This commitment to our own history is also in keeping with the spirit of our times, to which we feel so closely linked. The fact that we are so involved in building a new national reality that goes much deeper than an ideological revolution - for it pragmatically recognizes change and dynamism as the driving force behind social and political life - does not inhibit us but, on the contrary, connects us to a world that is in a surprising process of renewal. We are only now emerging from a paralysing period of confrontation, so we do not yet know what policies and doctrines will prevail in the future. But we do know that concepts such as political freedom, social pluralism, market economics and international cooperation are all in the forefront of people's thinking and action throughout most of the world. After so many years of rhetorical preaching, today there are for the first time sound indications that a genuine international community is being forged - and this fills us with optimism and a sense of security.

That optimism and security do not prevent us from expressing our concerns regarding the problems remaining with us, perhaps even more dramatically than before, such as the deterioration of economic and social conditions which continue to exist in the developing countries and the catastrophic situation as regards the environment, which is threatening the very survival of mankind

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on Earth. The existence of such problems is not limited to just a few countries or just one region rather than others. As in the case of peace and democracy, these are global issues, and for that reason this forum must deal with them as matters of priority. It is no longer the nuclear nightmare that frightens us, but rather the dying of nature, which we have mercilessly abused, even to the point of endangering our own species. No longer is it the power of the super-Powers that is such a threat to mankind's survival; it is the ancient scourge of poverty that continues to erode the foundations of our civilization, whose great and unshirkable task is now to protect the dignity of all human beings without distinction as to race, culture or geographic location.

The United Nations today, thanks to the emerging new world order, has a responsibility to integrate the world, something that was unimaginable only a short time ago. We believe that at this session, which is the first one truly taking place in a post-cold-war atmosphere, the Assembly must make renewed, imaginative efforts to overcome existing stereotypes in a world that became accustomed to functioning as a kind of battlefield. If we could graphically describe the international reality that should prevail in our day, we would imagine all the nations of the world sitting around a table discussing, on an equal footing, the problems that inevitably affect us all. The era of trench warfare and walls is now behind us, much to the dismay of the skeptics and to the delight of those who never really ceased to believe in the possibility of a better world with freedom and democracy. Incredible though it may seem, we are entering an era in which peace is no longer just a fine word with no real meaning.

(President Cristiani Burkard)

El Salvador is a small country, but it is a small, great country that does not want to deprive itself of the great opportunity provided by peace. That applies to ourselves, to our neighbours, to our natural cultural community and to the world. Thus, we give priority to respect for human rights; we are trying to organize our economy; we have definitively renounced war as a means of dealing with internal or international problems. For that reason, we are here, calling on the economically most powerful nations to renew with actions their generous commitment to collaborate in the costly process of peace in El Salvador so that it will not be thwarted by lack of financial resources. The flow of external assistance to carry out the concrete agenda of bringing about peace is at a critical stage. That is why, from this rostrum, we renew our appeal for international solidarity to contribute to consolidating peace without obstacles in El Salvador.

(President Cristiani Burkard)

While the process is moving ahead in our country, and we are committed to its doing so fully and consistently, regional developments are no less promising. As a result of a decision of the International Court of Justice, we have just settled an old dispute with the fraternal Republic of Honduras, and we renew our unequivocal commitment to abide in good faith by that decision. At the same time, we continue striving to promote regional integration, especially with our Central American brothers. We believe in the common destiny of Central America, and for that reason we are working in a coordinated way to see to it that our region will be a zone of lasting democracy, progress and stability. We believe more and more in the real possibility of achieving a united Central America in which every country, without losing its identity, develops its own potential. It is a great task of the present with tremendous implications for the future.

We feel that we are members of the Iberian-American community of nations, which, though it does not yet exist officially, is becoming a reality in spirit and in the common aim of giving it shape. We have felt the beneficial effects of solidarity among nations that share the same language and culture. We have received and continue to receive enormous support from countries such as Mexico, Spain, Venezuela and Colombia, the "Group of Four Friends", whose contribution to achieving and consolidating peace is a shining page in our history. We reiterate our appreciation to them and to other friendly countries that have helped us in the great task of making El Salvador a new country.

We express once again our conviction that the United Nations, now more than ever, has a mission for the future. On its agenda two matters are at the forefront: global peace and sustainable international development. We are

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convinced that the United Nations, faced with those issues, will prove to be what President Bush said two days ago in this forum it would be: an Organization of truly united nations, for the first time since it was founded.

We are especially pleased to welcome the new States that have joined this great family of the United Nations. Their presence, which enhances the status of the Organization, is due largely to the great freedom movement that has marked our time. We favour the principle of universality, meaning that all the countries of the world, without exception, must be present in our Organization and must contribute. Thus we offer our support to help ensure that all pending cases and those that might emerge in the future will be resolved positively.

El Salvador has devoted all its energies to the peace process, towards whose success the United Nations is making such a decisive, efficient contribution. We will not waver for a moment in promoting that process, which is a matter of rebuilding the country and setting an example to the rest of the world. Those of us who have been on the side of freedom and democracy all along have been proved right by time. But that triumph is not ours; it belongs to the peoples of the world who have already suffered too much not to see, and soon, the fruits of progress, which are the only guarantees of internal stability and peace among nations.

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Republic of El Salvador for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Alfredo Felix Cristiani Burkard, President of the Republic of El Salvador, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

AGENDA ITEM 9 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE

Mr. DUMAS (France) (interpretation from French): Allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as President of our General Assembly. Your outstanding abilities earned a unanimous vote, which is a tribute both to your country and to the example it sets in its newly regained freedom.

Speaking from this rostrum last year, I welcomed the extraordinary winds of freedom which were sweeping oppressive regimes away everywhere in the world. I recalled the support that my country had always given to peoples' right to self-determination. I rejoiced at the promises of independence which arose on the ruins of empires.

The distance covered since then gives us grounds for hope. While in Europe the barriers around blocs tumbled, in Africa the chains of apartheid were removed and in Asia Governments contested by their people fell, new sovereign entities were established. Let us therefore welcome the delegations of the new Member States that have joined us.

These successes are also successes for our Organization. More than ever, the principles and rules of our Charter prove their immutable value; more than ever, let us show our commitment to them.

I should like to turn to Mr. Boutros-Ghali and commend the example he sets us: the example of his energy, of his entire action focused on the aims of our Organization and the application of our Charter's principles. He succeeds someone who has brought honour to our Organization. But rarely will a Secretary-General have succeeded in overcoming so many crises and challenges in the first year of his mandate. Let us therefore thank him for his efforts, his imagination and his determination.

(Mr. Dumas, France)

In spite of freedom's victories, peace has not always been the child of liberation. Rivalries between neighbours, ethnic tensions and border disputes fan discord and foment insecurity to the point of provoking the return of war in all its cruelty and savagery. Yugoslavia, Liberia, Somalia: the names ring sadly in our ears, and the examples are, unfortunately, legion. Universal peace, our absolute principle, is still only an ambition. It must become our primary mission.

To ensure that the paths of freedom become paths to peace everywhere, France proposes three lines of action: peace through the organization of security - that is, peace-keeping operations and collective security and disarmament measures; peace through the affirmation of justice - that is, economic and social development to bring about greater fairness and equality among nations and peoples; peace through solidarity among States which know how to use their independence to establish beneficial cooperation.

(Mr. Dumas, France)

Let us speak first of peace through the organization of security.

The immediate need is to halt the conflicts which are causing bloodshed in Europe, the border regions of Asia and Africa. They cast a sinister shadow over the successes of freedom and independence. The United Nations, strengthened by its new influence, reacted by mounting in the space of a few months peace-keeping operations on an unprecedented scale. Never before have so many men from such a large number of countries assembled under our flag, that of the international community.

Stopping the expansion of a neighbour or faction, protecting populations, helping to deliver humanitarian aid, providing reassurance and at times renewing dialogue between the parties involved - such are the many sensitive missions undertaken by the United Nations and our "Blue Helmets".

Though peaceful, these operations are dangerous. It is not a question of making war; our mission is a mission of peace. The task, always the same yet always different, must be given all possible support at the local level and all available means of suitable protection and defence.

There are cases in which we must intervene even though the cease-fire in question is neither complete nor lasting. There are cases in which, to impose respect, we must have clear rules of engagement binding on everyone. We need to define, for specific situations, a right of emergency, comprising measures for warning and protection. My country has several reasons for wanting this, as I am sure you will agree. Having become the leading participant in the peace-keeping forces, with what will soon be 6,000 men under the United Nations flag in former Yugoslavia, Cambodia, Lebanon, Western Sahara and El Salvador, France has paid a heavy price. Since the start of the year,

(Mr. Dumas, France)

eight of its sons have lost their lives, the last ones murdered in cowardly fashion. And they have not been the only ones. From this rostrum, I should like to pay a solemn tribute to all the soldiers of peace who have sacrificed their lives for the cause we all uphold.

In the face of the increasing number of crises and the human tragedies resulting from them, our world is searching for new stability. It is adapting its instruments for peace and solidarity and devising others for the new times. It is essential that everyone be mobilized, most particularly the regional organizations. The Western European Union (WEU) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) are in the process of shaping their future. The Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) is establishing its jurisdiction. In the wake of the Helsinki summit, France is now proposing to the CSCE member States the adoption of a code of conduct which would encompass and define the norms governing our collective security. This idea, which was also set out by Germany, could lead to the adoption of a treaty on security. France is also continuing and will continue to advocate establishment of a court of arbitration and conciliation to prevent conflicts.

It is fortunate, moreover, that Chapter VIII of the Charter has at last, in the space of a few months, taken on its full meaning. I applaud the action of our Secretary-General, who has recommended precisely that the States members of regional organizations contribute to peace-keeping operations. His thinking concurred with that of the CSCE at the Helsinki summit and with that of France.

Indeed, the United Nations remains the necessary recourse in all these instances, as the case of former Yugoslavia has shown us only too well. Our

(Mr. Dumas, France)

Organization confers universal legitimacy on peace-keeping operations. It is the United Nations which shoulders, if need be, the overall responsibility. Hence, what is at stake today is not to relieve the United Nations of its task but to help it perform it in the most effective manner.

Yes, our peace mission is above all a matter of prevention: preventing conflicts, or preventing them from worsening and spreading. France therefore welcomed with keen interest the Secretary-General's proposals in his "Agenda for Peace". These set forth in outline form a charter for preventive diplomacy which is urgently needed.

Once the Gulf War was over, the President of the French Republic underlined the need for new thinking. I am glad to see that this new thinking is now well under way and that France's proposals are being considered. I am also pleased that the European Community is offering specific assistance.

I should like to confirm today, from this rostrum, France's commitment to make available to the Secretary-General, at any time, a contingent of 1,000 men for a peace-keeping operation. I hope that this example will be followed, for our Organization must be sure that it can react quickly and forcefully as soon as there is a threat of a conflict or a conflict flares up.

Reinforcement of preventive action should also encourage us to continue thinking about the reactivation of the United Nations Military Staff Committee. It is important, in any case, to strengthen the links between the Member States and the Secretariat Department of Peace-Keeping Operations, every aspect of whose work is deserving of praise.

Preventive diplomacy, along with the development of peace-keeping operations, and the greater role for regional organizations: these are two indispensable pillars of the collective security system the world needs today.

(Mr. Dumas, France)

But there is a third one: disarmament.

At their summit meeting on 31 January 1992, the members of the Security Council recalled that disarmament is one of our Organization's priorities and how essential it is for all Member States to fulfil the obligations they have undertaken with respect to arms control and disarmament itself. The progress achieved in two years has been spectacular: a reduction in stockpiles in Europe thanks to the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) and the CFE 1-A; the commitment by the two super-Powers to genuine nuclear disarmament, which will be spread over a period of many years; and the convention banning chemical weapons, which for the first time will eliminate an entire category of weapons of mass destruction. This disarmament effort is accompanied for the first time by a move for transparency: all treaties are coupled with stringent verification procedures, and in Europe we have signed an "open sky" treaty providing for free over-flight. Monitoring is the mother of all assurances.

But the illegal spread of these same weapons threatens to break the momentum for peace. The war against proliferation must be stepped up and waged relentlessly. In this area, as in others, United Nations decisions must be fully respected. New measures will no doubt be necessary, particularly given the risk of the uncontrolled proliferation of ballistic missiles. To avert the danger, let us therefore strengthen international cooperation without delay.

My country has in the past put forth proposals from this rostrum to stop the development of an arms race in space. France will shortly propose a measure to enhance confidence by making it mandatory to give advance notice of

(Mr. Dumas, France)

firings of ballistic missiles and rockets carrying satellites or other space objects. This notification measure, if adopted, would be complemented by the establishment of an international centre, under United Nations auspices, responsible for collecting and using the data received.

(Mr. Dumas, France)

In deciding to suspend its nuclear tests until the end of 1992, France has shown that it is ready to help further the disarmament process. The suspension is temporary and its extension will be subject to reappraisal. Let us act so as progressively to reduce the number and power of such experiments in a lasting way. France has also made a contribution to disarmament by ratifying Additional Protocol No. 1 of the Treaty banning nuclear weapons in Latin America. In other parts of the world, it supports proposals to establish denuclearized zones, especially in South Asia, the Middle East, and Africa. My country is ready to provide guarantees for security, in conjunction with other nuclear Powers, to countries committed to establishing such zones.

This year, the General Assembly begins preparing for the conference on extending the non-proliferation Treaty, to be held in 1995. The indefinite extension of this Treaty without renegotiation is an important event for international security. France, which is now a signatory of the non-proliferation Treaty, realizes that the nuclear Powers have a special contribution to make to this goal. France is ready to do its part. Collective security is the guard-rail of peace. Its development on an equitable basis will be the guarantee for all peoples.

I shall now touch upon the subject of peace through greater justice by means of economic and social development. France has consistently said that there can be no lasting peace so long as some peoples are faced with extreme poverty and famine. There can be no peace so long as we seem to tolerate unacceptable discrepancies in standards of living. There can be no peace without hope for justice and for progress towards greater equality.

(Mr. Dumas, France)

Responsibility for real progress in this direction above all rests with our Organization and its Members, who are continuing to focus their efforts in this direction.

The United Nations family in the broadest sense - the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and all the specialized agencies - is ready to assume this responsibility. However, I would like to see the nucleus of the family, the Secretariat, resume its proper role as a prime mover. What agency better than the Secretariat can appreciate and evaluate the order of priorities, provide the impetus, and avoid duplications and waste?

But there can be no sustainable development in a deteriorating environment. The future of our planet requires ever closer solidarity between the North and South. Such solidarity should enable us to succeed in bringing about equitable development with due respect for the natural gifts of the Earth. The success of Rio is encouraging. But let us begin by respecting our commitment to devote at least 0.7 per cent of our gross national product to official development assistance. France will do so. It has already doubled the amount of its financing to the World Environment Fund and contributed to the establishment of a 20-billion franc programme agreed upon by the European Community.

The General Assembly will shortly take up the Secretary-General's report on the results of the Rio Conference. It will have to decide among other things on the establishment of a commission for sustainable development that will be the central mechanism for following up the Conference's decisions. France, which was one of the first States to back the establishment of such a commission, hopes that it will convene at an early date, if possible in 1993,

(Mr. Dumas, France)

and that it will begin by examining how the pledges at Rio are to be implemented. Development and the environment remain the two major issues of the years ahead.

Finally, the social dimension should not be absent from our concerns. The President of the French Republic, on 31 January 1992, gave his full support to convening a world summit on social development. Let us not forget that man must remain central to our concerns. It is for humanity, through the necessary solidarity among humans, that lasting peace will drive away the hatred and wars which still cast a pall over its future.

I now turn to the subject of peace through solidarity. An important step forward has been taken with the progress of humanitarian activities that has been encouraged and supported by the United Nations. My country, which can take credit for having been a pioneer in this field, therefore welcomes the impetus which has thus been given to humanitarian action.

The High Commissioner for Refugees, the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Action, and United Nations forces are cooperating in providing assistance to populations exposed to violence, be they in Iraq, Yugoslavia, or Africa. A new principle of humanitarian law is taking shape which meets the aspiration of humanity, including the most unfortunate among its members. It will be to the credit of our Organization, as the end of the century approaches, to have helped in this decisive and historic progress transcending the barriers of national jurisdictions and regulations. It was precisely to make such a point that the President of the French Republic went to Sarajevo to open the way for the arrival of relief to that martyred city. To lay down the law in this matter is essential; to act is better still.

(Mr. Dumas, France)

France never tires of repeating that human rights are inalienable. So long as they are not respected, no peace is legitimate. Today still, in too many places, populations are terrorized and minorities maltreated. The World Conference on Human Rights will be one of the important events and rendezvous in 1993. It will be the occasion for us to reaffirm the universality of human rights and to strengthen the effectiveness of mechanisms to ensure compliance. Humanitarian action and peace-keeping are necessary functions, but they are needed in specific circumstances. Sooner or later, peoples will have to address the necessity of renewing the ties of their solidarity and rebuilding together a space for exchanges and cooperation. Lasting peace depends on this. It is clearly inconceivable that the movement for self-determination, which was so earnestly desired, should be judged guilty after the fact of the worst regressions.

The example of Yugoslavia is on everybody's mind. Can we tolerate a return to the most barbaric practices, the very names of which are an insult to the human race: the massacre of civilians, detention camps without humanitarian monitoring, "ethnic cleansing"? A solution can only come about from two distinct measures: on one hand, the establishment of a higher framework for arbitration and conciliation; on the other, the protection of minorities. The latter, living within recognized borders, should have the benefit of guarantees, equitable representation being one and not the least such guarantee.

(Mr. Dumas, France)

Hopes have been raised in places where once everything still seemed to be impossible. I would like here to pay a tribute to men of good will, including Prime Minister Panic of Yugoslavia. This is yet another reason to intensify our efforts and help the Yugoslav peoples out of their tragic impasse. Let us conceive, let us decide, and then let us impose.

In Cambodia, a long-suffering people has been making its return to the international community since the Paris Agreements reached under United Nations auspices. This progress embodies a great deal of hope for the Cambodian people and for Asia as a whole, and must not be jeopardized as a result of the refusal of the Khmer Rouge to open up its zone and demobilize its forces. There is always room for discussion among partners of good will. No one should use the pretext of his own complaints to try to block a peace plan which is binding on all the signatories of the Paris Agreements and, beyond that, upon the entire international community.

After so many years of war in the Middle East, the prospect of a settlement based on justice and security for all is beginning to emerge thanks to the courage and clear-sightedness of all the parties. When the time comes, the international community, through the Security Council, will have to give its guarantee to a settlement. There is still a long way to go. The European Community is contributing to this future construction. France is doing its part in this.

In South Africa, in spite of the terrible traces left by the hateful system of racial discrimination, the resolve to end apartheid and build a new open city has at last won the day. I would like to express from this rostrum today France's concern at the rising violence in South Africa and tell the leaders of that country: do not destroy the enormous hope you so recently inspired.

(Mr. Dumas, France)

I shall mention only briefly our old Europe, since its trials and tribulations are widely known, as are its bursts of hope. I can say much, however, in only a few words. The peoples of Europe wish to speed up their march toward peace, unity and prosperity. Such is the ambition affirmed by the signatories of the Maastricht Treaty - to create a genuine union of democratic States having the redoubled strength that comes from the combination of cultures, economic means and political resolve, as Mr. Douglas Hurd said so well when he spoke previously on our behalf. I am pleased and proud that the French people voted in favour of ratifying the European unity treaty. My fellow citizens chose the only future of any value, a future which will build peace on solidarity - political, economic, and human.

The European Union will not be inward looking, self-centred, and closed. On the contrary, the citizens of the European Union will be patriots of the old continent become the new world. They will have a sense of solidarity among themselves, be responsive to their brothers on the rest of the continent, attached to their respective nations yet firm in the face of any heightened national sentiments which invoke nationalism only the better to divide humanity and serve designs of domination and exclusion.

The collapse of the wall which separated our continent spurred the efforts toward union. Today the difficulties of this Europe, separated from us for too long, then liberated, but weakened and troubled, are yet further encouragement to us to create this pole of stability on which all Europe will be able to build its peace and prosperity. That Europe will not be self-centred. When the time comes, it will welcome its neighbours from Central and Eastern Europe as brothers. Setting the example and opening the way are the first steps of true solidarity, that same solidarity which it is incumbent on our Organization to implement. The Union will undertake to serve

(Mr. Dumas, France)

the very ideals of our Charter: "We, the peoples of the United Nations" and now, we, the peoples of the European Union.

I shall now conclude. It is incumbent on Governments, as it is on peoples, to set the example. Let us not hide from the fact that peace, like life, has no price but does have a cost. It is unacceptable for the United Nations to be foundering in an increasingly severe financial crisis. Certainly, our Organization has the necessary ambition to express at the global level that general resolve which Jean-Jacques Rousseau said is more than the simple addition of individual interests. But the sum total will be all the greater and all the more universal as the contribution of each and every one is significant and generous. The United Nations will have value only in so far as each State, in compliance with the Charter, fulfils its responsibilities.

There can be no better service nor better example to humanity than to enable the duty of solidarity to prevail. Let us discharge this duty, first of all, by honouring our obligations. Peace is not a gift from heaven; it depends, above all, on human resolve. Thus a new era is opening for nations as for peoples. Today, as I speak, it is still in a state of confusion. Tomorrow, it will shine with the fires of justice, peace and solidarity.

Mr. QIAN Qichen (China) (interpretation from Chinese): May I begin by warmly congratulating you, Sir, on your election to the presidency of the current session of the United Nations General Assembly. I believe that, given your talent and experience, you will guide this session to a successful completion of the noble mission entrusted to it by the Charter of the United Nations. I would also like to express my appreciation and thanks to your predecessor, Mr. Shihabi, for the contribution he made to accomplishing the tasks of the last session.

(Mr. Qian Qichen, China)

I would like to take this opportunity to extend my warm welcome and congratulations to the 13 States that have been admitted to the United Nations this year: the Republic of Armenia, the Azerbaijani Republic, the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Republic of Croatia, the Republic of Georgia, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Republic of Kyrgyzstan, the Republic of Moldova, the Republic of San Marino, the Republic of Slovenia, the Republic of Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and the Republic of Uzbekistan.

Since the last session of the General Assembly, profound changes have taken place in the world, with events of major consequences occurring one after another, from East to West and North to South. The international community has finally shaken off the old pattern whose main feature was the confrontation between the two military blocs. The world has now entered a new historical phase of development towards multipolarity.

We in China have a saying: "Past experience can serve as a guide for the present". The tortuous course that mankind has traversed in this century, particularly since the end of the Second World War, has revealed a historical truth: any Power, however strong it may be, is bound to decline if it goes against the people's will for peace and development. It has always been a shared aspiration and objective of the people of all countries to work for world peace, national stability, social progress, economic growth and a better life. This is a historical trend which no force can resist.

(Mr. Qian Qichen, China)

The genuine peace that the people of the world have longed for has not come with the end of the cold war. On the contrary, the world remains uneasy, with new problems added to the old ones and armed conflicts erupting one after another as a result of disrupted equilibrium. Hegemonism and power politics continue to exist. The attempt of some big Powers to control developing countries politically and economically has become more and more obvious. Long-hidden ethnic conflicts have surfaced with a vengeance and the North-South contradictions have further intensified. The road to peace and development before the people of the world is covered with thorns.

As we can all see, a dangerous "seismic belt" extending from the Balkans to the Caucasus and to Central Asia is taking shape. In some regions, people have once again been plunged into war and turmoil, with millions of refugees fleeing in all directions. These conflicts have occurred in those areas where different ethnic groups have traditionally lived together, with age-old antagonisms suddenly coming to the surface under the new situation. These conflicts are interwoven with historical feuds, territorial disputes, political rivalries, clashes of economic interests, and religious intolerance. They have been further complicated by the involvement of outside forces.

In our view, force should not be used even as a last resort in the search of the settlement of a problem, however complicated it may be. The fundamental solution lies in a reconciliation of various ethnic groups through dialogues on an equal footing and peaceful negotiations. We sincerely hope that the parties to the conflicts will, proceeding from the overriding interest of maintaining the peace and in the interests of the people, abandon the threat or use of force and seek a political settlement of their conflicts through friendly consultations and negotiations on an equal footing in the spirit of mutual respect, good-neighbourliness and common progress.

(Mr. Qian Qichen, China)

We support the United Nations in its posltive efforts to avoid an escalation of conflicts and seek peaceful settlements. Outside intervention and mediation can be resorted to when necessary, provided that they are based on a strict observance of the principles and objectives of the United Nations Charter and the basic norms of international law. Only mediation or intervention in such a manner can contribute to a peaceful settlement of conflicts, the stability and unity of sovereign States, and the amicable coexistence of different ethnic groups.

The Middle East peace process has taken a favourable turn thanks to the joint efforts of the Arab countries and Israel and the support of the rest of the international community. We hope that the parties concerned will seize the opportunity, take a flexible and practical approach, and conduct serious negotiations in order to remove obstacles and seek a comprehensive and fair solution to the Middle East issue, including the restoration of the national rights of the Palestinian people on the basis of the relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions.

The Asia-Pacific region has enjoyed political stability and a sustained economic growth. In Cambodia, the striving for peace and rehabilitation has become the order of the day. Political settlement of the Cambodian issue is irreversible, though difficulties and twists and turns are hardly avoidable. The implementation of the Paris Agreements in their totality requires not only determination but also patience. In Afghanistan, the resistance forces have taken control. We hope they will end the bloodshed so as to create suitable conditions for the election. On the Korean peninsula, the North and the South have intensified their dialogue, resulting in a further relaxation of tension there. The recent establishment of diplomatic relations between China and the

(Mr. Qian Qichen, China)

Republic of Korea will have a far-reaching impact on stability and peace in North-East Asia.

The turbulent and complicated international situation has further awakened countries and peoples of the world to the urgency and necessity of establishing a new international order. The world of the future should not be a place where only the interests and privileges of big Powers or power groups are protected, nor a place where international affairs are monopolized and manipulated by the big, strong, and wealthy countries only. The old world order based on unequal relationships no longer works.

A new international order should be based on the universal observance of the five principles of mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual non-aggression, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence. This is in conformity with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter. All countries, big or small, strong or weak, rich or poor, should have the right to choose a social system and a road to development suited to their actual conditions. Countries should respect each other, treat each other as equals, and resolve their disputes through peaceful negotiations. Only when all countries undertake to observe these principles can there be genuine democracy in international relations. We are convinced that as the world moves towards multipolarity, an equitable and rational international order of peace and stability will come into being.

The United States and the former Soviet Union or Russia have reached some new agreements on nuclear-arms reduction in recent years. These agreements have been well-received by the international community, which hopes that they will be earnestly implemented by the countries concerned. At the same time, it is clear to people that even after the aforementioned disarmament

(Mr. Qian Qichen, China)

agreements are fully implemented, the major military Powers will still be in possession of the largest arsenals of the most sophisticated nuclear and other high-tech weapons, and the capabilities to develop space weapons.

After years of negotiations, the chemical weapons convention has finally been concluded. It has laid an international legal basis for a world-wide elimination of such weapons of mass destruction. Though some of its provisions are not fair and balanced, the purposes and objectives defined in the convention have nonetheless won the unanimous endorsement and support of the international community. We hope that these purposes and objectives will be observed and carried out effectively in the interest of the security of all countries.

China has all along stood for the complete prohibition and thorough destruction of all weapons of mass destruction. Pending the realization of this goal, it is necessary for the international community to take, as a transitional step, appropriate measures to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction in the interest of regional and world security and stability. We maintain that internationai non-proliferation should be pursued in a fair, reasonable, comprehensive and balanced manner without prejudice to the legitimate security interests of any country, to its socio-economic development, or to internatiorlal cooperation in the application of science and technology for peaceful purposes.

We oppose the attempt of a country to interfere in and obstruct the normal cooperation between sovereign States under the pretext of preventing arms proliferation. We strongly condemn the blatant violation of one's own commitment to an international agreement by selling large amounts of advanced weapons and equipment, in gross interference in another country's internal affairs.

(Mr. Qian Qichen, China)

We would like to make the following suggestions in the field of disarmament and arms control. First, all nuclear-weapon States should undertake not to be the first to use nuclear weapons or to resort to the threat or use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon States in any circumstances whatsoever. Secondly, all nuclear-weapon States should support proposals for the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, respect the status of the existing nuclear-weapon-free zones, and undertake corresponding obligations. Those countries which have deployed nuclear weapons abroad should withdraw all of them to their own territories. Thirdly, all countries with space capabilities should follow the principle of the peaceful use of space and immediately stop their research, testing, production, and deployment of space weapons and refrain from extending their weapons systems into space.

In today's world, the gulf between the rich and the poor is further widening. The population of the richest countries and that of the poorest countries each accounts for 20 per cent of the world's total, but their income gap has grown wider, from 30-fold in the 1960s to 90-fold in the 1990s. The question of North-South relations has become more acute. Development and peace are matters of equal urgency and importance.

(Mr. Qian Qichen, China)

The sluggish growth of the world economy, unequal and unfair trade, the plummeting prices of many primary products and crushing debt burdens are among the unfavourable external conditions which have continued to place severe constraints on the economic development of developing countries. Quite a few of them have suffered a constant drop in the growth rate of their per capita gross national product (GNP). Some have even registered negative economic growth rates. Their terms of trade continue to deteriorate, which hampers their export efforts. They have found it even more difficult to attract foreign investment and technology.

Peace and development are mutually supportive. They can promote or hinder each other, but they cannot supersede each other. It is impossible to preserve world peace without development. There can hardly be durable stability and prosperity in the world in the absence of economic development and social progress in developing countries. A protracted economic stagnation or even decline in developing countries will also affect further economic growth in developed countries.

Developing countries should mainly rely on themselves to achieve real economic growth. While restructuring their economies to speed up their economic development, many of them are reviewing their experience and earnestly exploring paths of development suited to their national conditions.

No one can deny that the old international economic order, being irrational and inequitable, is an important external cause of the poverty and backwardness of developing countries. First and foremost, developed countries have the responsibility and obligation to take effective measures, including the following.

(Mr. Qian Qichen, China)

First, developed countries should set aside 0.7 per cent of their GNP for assistance to developing countries in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the United Nations; increase official development assistance, and address the debt question and work to rectify the anomaly of the flight of capital from developing to developed countries.

Secondly, they should observe the basic principles of the generalized system of preferences devised by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development; dismantle discriminatory trade barriers; further open their markets to developing countries; and endeavour to keep the prices of primary products at rational levels.

Thirdly, they should resume and increase official and non-governmental technical assistance and the concessional transfer of technology to developing countries in order gradually to narrow the North-South gap in science and technology and to facilitate the economic restructuring and technological progress of developing countries.

It must be stressed that political stability is an important prerequisite for the economic growth of developing countries. Assistance for the purpose of applying pressure on the recipient countries will cause turbulence and instability in these countries, which will be even more detrimental to their economic development.

It is obviously one-sided and harmful to make irresponsible comments about the human rights situation in developing countries in disregard of the differences in historical backgrounds and cultural traditions as well as the actual conditions in these countries. For the people of developing countries, the right to subsistence and the right to development are undoubtedly the fundamental and the most important human rights of all. In those areas hit by

(Mr. Qian Qichen, China)

severe natural disasters year after year, people are starving; in war-ridden areas, millions are turned into refugees. How can people living in such conditions enjoy human rights?

Establishing an equitable and rational new international economic order based on equality and mutual benefit will be a reliable guarantee of balanced, healthy and sustained growth in the world economy, and an important precondition for gradually narrowing the North-South gap as well. The achievment of this goal calls for serious dialogue between the North and the South and joint efforts by both. As long as the two sides adopt a positive approach, seek common ground on major issues while putting aside minor differences, seek mutual benefit and actively look for ways to cooperate effectively, the North-South dialogue will make headway.

The important documents adopted at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and the Conventions on climate change and biological diversity open for signature during the Conference reflect the consensus and understanding that countries at different stages of development have reached on environmental protection and economic development. We hope that the obligations and rights in respect of environmental protection will be fulfilled or exercised fully, and that global cooperation in this field will provide scope for improved North-South relations.

The Chinese Government actively supports the proposals for a World Summit for Social Development, under United Nations auspices. It warmly welcomes the convocation of the fourth World Conference on Women, to be held in Beijing in September 1995. The Chinese organization committee was set up in August this year, and China will begin preparing in earnest to ensure that arrangements for the conference in Beijing run smoothly.

(Mr. Qian Qichen, China)

The historic changes in the international situation have also presented formidable challenges to the United Nations. The people of the world have high expectations of this world Organization. How the United Nations will adapt itself to the new international situation, address major international issues in a more positive, balanced, just and reasonable manner, promote world peace and development and play its role in the efforts to establish a new world order has become a major concern of the international community.

The Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, has submitted a detailed and extensive mid-year report (A/47/277) on the role of the United Nations in maintaining international peace, which merits our careful study. We appreciate his efforts.

The reform of the United Nations is now on the agenda, and its success depends on sound principles and on choosing the right direction. We should like to offer for consideration the following thoughts, which we think conform to the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter.

The reform should contribute to maintaining the sovereignty of Member States. Sovereign States are the subjects of international law and form the basis of the United Nations. Safeguarding State sovereignty should be a fundamental principle of a new world order.

The reform should facilitate the peaceful settlement of international conflicts. The United Nations should be an international organization dedicated to preserving peace and promoting cooperation. Only when it abides by the basic norms governing international relations, persists in settling all international disputes through peaceful means and opposes the threat or use of force will the United Nations be able to maintain international peace and security. The arbitrary use of military intervention by the United Nations or

(Mr. Qian Qichen, China)

the indiscriminate and wilful imposition of mandatory measures on Member States would not be helpful to the resolution of conflicts, and, worse still, would impair the credibility and role of the United Nations.

The reform should contribute to the balanced, healthy and sustained economic development of countries. Economic development is a major concern of the vast majority of the 179 States Members of the United Nations. In today's world, the North-South economic gap keeps widening, and the gulf between rich and poor is getting greater. The United Nations should attach great importance to the question of development, as it does to the settlement of international conflicts and crises. Only by so doing can it win support from the overwhelming majority of Member States.

The reform should embody the basic principles of democracy, justice, objectivity, rationality, efficiency and balance of interests. It is not a matter that concerns solely a few big Powers, nor only the strong and the rich. The balanced approach should not be discarded in disregard of the reality. The reform should serve the general objective of establishing an equitable and rational new world order of peace and stability. The reform efforts will not receive understanding and support from Member States unless their opinions on this matter are earnestly sought and discussed, and studied fully and thoroughly.

From 1981 to 1990 China's GNP grew at an average annual rate of 8.9 per cent. In the 1980s significant changes took place in China. We enjoy political stability, economic prosperity, national unity and harmony. The Chinese people are enjoying their lives and work.

(Mr. Qian Qichen, China)

Since the beginning of the 1990s people in China have been working hard to accelerate economic development and the reform and opening-up programme. Spurred by Deng Xiaoping's remarks at the beginning of the year, this programme and economic development have entered a new phase. The GNP growth rate this year is projected to reach and even exceed 9 per cent. China's economy has great vitality and its prospects are bright.

China has expanded its open areas. As a result, a new pattern of general opening up has gradually taken shape, extending from coastal to border areas, from areas along the Yangtze river to the provincial capitals. China has further expanded the scale on which it can absorb foreign investment. In the first half of this year contracted foreign investment reached $14.6 billion, 2.2 times what it was in the same period last year. During the same period China's imports and exports reached $33.06 billion and $35.61 billion respectively, up 23.4 per cent and 17.3 per cent over the same period last year. The total volume of foreign trade for the year is expected to exceed $150 billion.

(Mr. Qian Qichen, China)

China's reform and opening-up programme is by no means a matter of expediency; rather, it is a long-term strategy, for it conforms to the popular will and benefits the people. Therefore, it enjoys their support and is bound to succeed. China is a force working steadfastly for world peace; its political stability and the success of its reform and opening up will contribute significantly to peace and development in Asia and the world at large. China will, as always, support the United Nations in its constructive efforts to promote peace and development. It will, together with the Governments and peoples of other countries, work for the establishment of a new world order conducive to world peace and common development.

Mr. KINKEL (Germany) (spoke in German; English text furnished by the delegation): In electing you to your high office last week, Mr. President, the General Assembly also identified itself with the victory of freedom and democracy throughout Europe. I should like to congratulate you on this and greet you as the representative of a country with which we have a close and long-standing friendship.

For you, Mr. Secretary-General, this is the first session of the General Assembly since you took office. For the determination and energy with which you have set about the huge tasks ahead you deserve the appreciation of us all.

I extend a special welcome to the representatives of those countries that have been admitted to our Organization since the last session of the General Assembly.

The world breathed a sigh of relief when the East-West confrontation ended at long last. There was an almost tangible euphoria of peace. Since then we have come back down to earth. Freedom has opened the door not only to

(Mr. Kinkel, Germany)

historic opportunities but, unfortunately, to the old demons as well: blind nationalism and hegemonic aspirations, xenophobia and religious fanaticism. In this process, the dramatic changes to the political map are far from having settled down. The impact of the quake cannot yet be fully assessed, nor can we rule out further tremors. But despite all our new problems we must not forget that hardly any previous generation had such opportunities to live in peace, harmony and prosperity with its neighbours. We can therefore look to the future with confidence.

And this opportunity extends beyond Europe. The termination of the East-West conflict has paved the way for the settlement of conflicts in the southern hemisphere as well, conflicts which for decades seemed insoluble. In the Middle East, in southern Africa and in Cambodia the parties involved are moving towards each other in a manner that would have been inconceivable in the days of the ideological proxy wars.

Thus my message is: let us continue to be guided by the vision of a better, a more equitable world. With great perseverance, we have ended the East-West confrontation. We now need the same commitment, the same stamina, to build a new order. We must keep in mind the new energies that have been released and harness them for peace and for mankind.

By establishing European union, the European Community is trying to seize the chance of the century for the entire continent. It is the vision of a truly united Europe. The affirmation of this union by our French friends has kept alive the chance to make that vision a reality.

(Mr. Kinkel, Germany)

However, Governments must also take their citizens along with them on this road to Europe. Europe does not grow out of treaties; it grows from the hearts of its citizens or it does not grow at all. Strengthening their confidence in Europe's common future remains the principal task of Community policy in the months ahead. Although the dissatisfaction, uncertainty and lack of understanding that have become apparent in nearly all countries cannot simply be dismissed, no changes to the Treaty of Maastricht are needed to cushion some of the effects.

The European Community is not only a model of hope and prosperity for Eastern Europe; it has also developed new forms of cooperation and partnership with the developing countries. Its path towards integration has inspired many regional initiatives in Asia, Africa and Latin America. In the light of this global responsibility, too, Europe must come to speak with one voice - here at the United Nations as well.

In these times of change, when so much of what was valid yesterday is being challenged, when many people in the West see their standard of living, their personal security and their national and cultural identity threatened, when even more people in the East and in the South do not know today what they are going to live on tomorrow, when an army of refugees from war and poverty threatens to become a new migration, we shall have to find an answer to the question of whether the international community, through its new spirit of common endeavour following the cold war, will be capable of mastering the challenges of our time.

There is doubt as to the ability of the political establishment as a whole to find solutions, and this applies not only to Europe. There is a huge gap between people's expectations and the actual achievements of Governments,

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both internally and externally. Governments are under an obligation to achieve again greater consistency between verbal commitment and action.

The historic process of European unification is currently being overshadowed by something that was considered inconceivable only a few years ago: the return of barbarity to the European house. A war of destruction and expulsion is raging in Bosnia and Herzegovina, a conflict which conjures up a terrible past. What is happening there - and we cannot be clear enough about this - is genocide.

The London Conference has underscored the resolve of the community of nations to silence the weapons. It has initiated the Geneva negotiating process as a common, major effort of the United Nations and the European Community - probably one of the last chances to secure a political solution in the foreseeable future. The co-Chairmen of the conference, Cyrus Vance and Lord Owen, have our full support. Germany will play its part in this peace conference. But one thing must remain clear: the community of nations will never recognize borders that have been changed by force. Those who hope to receive assistance from the family of nations later must stop fighting now - at once.

Despite cautious signs that the Serbian leaders are perhaps after all becoming aware of the consequences of being outlawed by the international community, murder and expulsion continue. We have been shocked by the report of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) mission on the crimes and atrocities perpetrated in the detention camps. We Europeans especially must be honest: each day on which innocent civilians are fired at and prisoners tortured undermines the credibility and authority of the new Europe we aim to build together.

(Mr. Kinkel, Germany)

War also prevails in Somalia, the Sudan, Liberia, Afghanistan, Georgia and Nagorno-Karabakh. Greed, anarchy and human suffering have assumed heart-wrenching dimensions, especially in Somalia. The community of nations, though late in doing so, has turned its attention to the starvation, misery and want of the people there. It is to be hoped that the efforts of the Secretary-General and his Special Representative Mr. Sahnoun will be able to restore peace to this sorely tried country and put it back on a sound economic foundation.

(Mr. Kinkel, Germany)

What are the conclusions for the international community that must be drawn from this situation? Respect for international law and human rights as the foundation of peace and international order was one of the main lessons of the Second World War. That experience led to the creation of the United Nations and the European Community. The aim of overcoming nationalistic hegemony, the use of force and violations of human rights by means of international and supranational cooperation is still valid. Even setbacks must not be allowed to divert us from this just path of law and respect for human dignity. There is no reasonable alternative, unless we want to revert to the law of the jungle.

Only if the United Nations or the regional organizations prove capable of protecting individual States from external aggression and minorities from domestic persecution will it be possible, now that the East-West conflict is over, to make the desired transition from policies of national hegemony and armament to the rule of law, collective security and economic and social development.

What will this require? Firstly, the system of collective security of the United Nations, and of regional arrangements such as the CSCE, must be made a powerful instrument of a new world domestic policy. Conflicts are, unfortunately, emerging faster than the instruments to contain them. You, Mr. Secretary-General, have made extensive proposals with the correct aim of making the United Nations, for the first time in its history, what the Charter intended it to be: the world community's chief custodian of peace; and that aim, I say here, can be achieved.

(Mr. Kinkel, Germany)

"Nip it in the bud!" This must be the golden rule of conflict prevention. Diplomatic activity must start before an acute threat to security occurs. Such activity must, where necessary, be reinforced by the preventive deployment of peace-keeping forces. This proposal has our full support. It must be made absolutely clear to a potential aggressor, right from the start, that he must expect to be confronted with the whole range of political, economic and military sanctions provided for in the United Nations Charter. Anyone who holds a protecting hand over the aggressor must expect to be isolated, and anyone who breaks sanctions will likewise have sanctions to contend with.

Crucial for collective security is close cooperation between institutions such as the United Nations or the CSCE on the one hand and collective defence alliances such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization or the Western European Union on the other. Initial steps have been taken in this direction in recognition of the fact that, even though the East-West conflict has ended, democracies must, firstly, remain capable of defending themselves and the new architecture must, secondly, become capable of defending itself. What is beyond dispute domestically must also be applied to international security if there is to be real order. If all other means fail, the law must, if necessary, be protected by military force against those who violate it. This is also a lesson from a past that was, for us Germans in particular, a disastrous one. This is anchored in the United Nations Charter.

Germany's contribution to international stability will continue to focus on peacemaking, through economic cooperation, protection of human rights, humanitarian aid, and international measures to protect the environment.

(Mr. Kinkel, Germany)

However, we must also establish the constitutional basis to enable us to make our armed forces available to the United Nations, with the approval of Parliament, for peace-keeping and peacemaking assignments. As a reunited and sovereign country we must assume all the rights and obligations of a Member of the United Nations to avoid any discrepancy between our verbal commitment to peace and human rights and our active involvement in their defence.

The Government and the Parliament of my country will not forget that our history commands us to show particular restraint and judgment; but, while remaining aware of the past, we must derive the strength and courage to find a better future.

Within the framework of its constitution Germany has already participated in United Nations operations - for example, in Namibia, Angola, Central America, Cambodia and Iraq - by providing logistic and organizational support, election observers, verification teams and medical personnel. Our relief flights to Sarajevo and Somalia have broadened the range of our commitment.

The reforms you have vigorously initiated, Mr. Secretary General, have our full backing. We encourage you to pursue them with determination. The appointment of a coordinator for humanitarian assistance has shown, despite all the scepticism, that this Organization is capable of change. Further reforms should, in our view, focus principally on three areas: rationalization of the Secretariat, streamlining its committees and procedures, and strengthening the position of the Secretary-General in relation to the subsidiary bodies and specialized agencies. This is urgently needed, especially in the central area of environment and development.

(Mr. Kinkel, Germany)

The Security Council is the guardian of international peace. Its efficiency and credibility are of equal importance. A debate on reforming the Council is under way. We Germans will not take the initiative in this respect, but if a change in the Council's composition is actually considered we too shall make known our intention to seek a permanent seat.

Secondly, States and regional organizations must assume greater responsibility. The United Nations must not be overstrained: the idea that it can protect and feed all people afflicted by external or internal war is a utopian.

Thirdly, we must further develop the international legal system with the aim of further protecting mankind and nature. This can now take place in a process of fair partnership, free from bloc ideology. This too represents a great opportunity in the wake of the East-West conflict. In this process, we must bring out the special dimension of law: it demands participation and consensus. All are equal before the law. It protects the weak and legitimizes the use of force where force is unavoidable.

No cultural region should try to force its own system of values on others. On the other hand, there is a body of human rights universally binding under international law which no one should seek to erode, not even on grounds of differing cultural traditions. This must be the central message of the Conference on Human Rights to be held in Vienna next year.

Under the Nazi regime, the gravest crimes against humanity were committed in the name of Germany. In 1945, the Germans in the western part of our country had the good fortune to be able to establish a free, democratic society based on the rule of law. Those in the other part of Germany had to

(Mr. Kinkel, Germany)

bear another totalitarian regime until 1990. So we Germans have well and truly suffered in this respect. We know from our own experience that a life of dignity and fulfilment is not possible without respect for human rights. I therefore never tire of repeating my belief that policy, including foreign policy, must focus on the individual. It is he who counts. It is he who must be protected and saved from injustice. The defence of human rights remains a central aim of German foreign policy.

(Mr. Kinkel, Germany)

An effective international legal system must enable people to exercise their human rights, afford protection to those whose human rights have been violated, and consistently bring the perpetrators to account. Together with our partners in the European Community we call for the appointment of a High Commissioner for Human Rights. Those who commit genocide, those who commit serious violations of human rights - and this, unfortunately, is happening all the time all over the world - ask Amnesty International - must be brought before an international crimes tribunal. I am gratified to note that Germany's proposal for such a tribunal is now receiving broad support. The International Law Commission should be given a mandate to draw up an appropriate statute.

We shall strive to ensure that the perpetrators of atrocities, no matter who they are, are brought to justice. No one should be able to rest in the assurance that the matter will be forgotten. This is another reason why we need a High Commissioner for Human Rights. His investigations and other information should be collated in a register to serve as the basis for subsequent criminal proceedings. Our experience with the regime in the former German Democratic Republic shows that the fear of such misdeeds being recorded is not without effect. Violation of human rights is one of mankind's great scourges. We should not spare ourselves the effort needed to expose, denounce and prevent them.

Although the massive East-West confrontation is a thing of the past, disarmament, confidence-building and the control of arms exports remain essential preconditions for enhancing peace. After an arms race spanning decades the new era has made considerable progress in the field of disarmament as well.

(Mr. Kinkel, Germany)

Yet the world is still bristling with weapons. We in Europe are the first to have begun destroying tanks. The pacification of the North must not lead to the South being armed to the hilt. The developing countries do not need more tanks and guns but more schools and hospitals. The United Nations Register of Conventional Arms must be seen as the point of departure for reducing the present irresponsible level of international trade in weapons.

Preventing the spread of weapons of mass destruction is the most urgent task in the field of disarmament today. Germany is determined to play a pioneering role in this respect. We are the only country in the world to have unilaterally and unconditionally renounced nuclear, biological and chemical weapons.

The Convention imposing a global ban on chemical weapons, which was prepared by the Geneva Conference on Disarmament under our chairmanship, is a milestone along this road. I call upon all Members of the United Nations to signal their support of this Convention during the present session of the General Assembly and to sign it without delay.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons must be extended indefinitely in 1995. If we fail to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons, mankind will become exposed to a nuclear threat no less frightening than that of the cold war. We cannot put the nuclear genie back in the bottle, but we must keep it under strict control. This also calls for an international convention for the enhancement of reactor safety.

All these are tasks enough, but the biggest of all is that of establishing a new partnership for development and environmental protection between poor and rich nations which will make the Earth a fit place for the present and future generations to live in.

(Mr. Kinkel, Germany)

The world is grossly unjust. From the day of their birth countless people do not have the slightest chance whatsoever of living in conditions that could even remotely be described as worthy of the human race. About a billion people live in abject poverty and can neither read nor write. Almost 20 million refugees are trying to escape from want. One fifth of the world's population consumes four fifths of all resources and earns 60 times as much as the poorest fifth.

We in the industrialized countries, on the other hand, concerned with our own problems - which I do not deny exist - forget that, compared with many regions of the third world, we live on an "island of bliss". Many of us think only of our entitlements, about defending our standards of living. As a result, we tend to forget the values of humanity and solidarity.

Our free system in the West may have won the struggle with totalitarianism, but we must now prove that our economic system, our way of life, is able to secure lasting development in the eastern and southern regions of the globe as well.

In the third world countries, on the other hand, the recognition must continue to grow that they cannot simply make demands on others but are themselves primarily responsible for keeping their house in order. The Jakarta Conference has confirmed the clear change of attitude in this respect. This is an encouraging trend.

What is the essential requirement? It is to develop a global partnerhip and forms of coexistence in the North and the South which will ensure mutual survival. For this we shall have to find a reasonable middle way between the completely unrealistic attitude that everything must be achieved at one fell swoop and that of resignation, the attitude that it is already too late.

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The North must open its markets to give the weaker economies a genuine chance of development. By eliminating protectionism we must strengthen the economic foundations of those countries currently fighting for democracy and human rights. That is why it is so important to bring the negotiations of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) to a successful conclusion.

Stabilizing the economy of Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States must not be done at the expense of development aid. Bringing the new democracies in the East and the developing countries into a global partnership together was the general objective of the economic summit meeting in Munich. Germany, too, has kept its word in this respect. In spite of our exceptional domestic situation and our enormous contribution to the process of economic recovery in the new democracies between Bug and Vladivostok, our development aid budget has continued to grow - even since 1990. And we shall continue to provide substantial support for measures to bridge the poverty gap between North and South. Our offer to make Bonn the location for some United Nations development activities should be understood in this sense.

What is required is a radical technological transformation in the fields of transport, energy, industrial production, housing and agriculture and a new generation of environment-friendly technologies. To implement the results of the Rio Conference there will have to be standard reduction levels for carbon dioxide emissions as well as effective measures for the protection of forests.

The most difficult task is at the same time one of the most important - that of implementing a responsible population policy. This calls for changes which considerably affect the rights of the individual. The first step must be to improve the social status of women in the developing countries. People

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have a right to determine the size of their family themselves. Family planning must be given greater prominence in development strategy. The importance of the International Conference on Population and Development to be held in 1994 and of the World Conference on Women scheduled for 1995 cannot be emphasized enough.

The help provided by the industrialized countries can never be more than help towards self-help. One must also draw the necessary conclusion from the collapse of communist ideology: totalitarianism renders a country incapable of development.

In a nutshell, what is needed is a departure from short-sighted egoism and over-exploitation of nature towards measures to safeguard the future, towards more social justice, as well as a balance between ecology and economy. In this age of growing individual freedom we must also remain capable of demonstrating solidarity and showing consideration for the community as a whole. The responsible use of freedom is the real challenge at the end of this century. In order to meet this challenge, and for the sake of our children's future, the world - East and West, North and South - must learn together. We must learn to survive together in a new world.

No institution is more suited to be the central authority of this learning community than the United Nations. In 1995 it will celebrate its fiftieth anniversary. Let us by that date together strengthen this forum to make it capable of fulfilling the hopes of people all over the globe. Let us not forget: We, the nations, will get the world Organization we deserve!

(Mr. Kinkel, Germany)

Hardly any country can have been more affected by the dramatic upheavals of our time and by the disparity of opportunity and risk, of hope and anxiety about the future, than has Germany. We have been reunited, and for that we are grateful - very grateful. Our prime task now is to complete the internal unification of our nation, and this task pushes us to the limits of our resources. None the less, we have contributed more to the economic recovery of central and eastern Europe and the members of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) than have all other countries together.

In Europe, our liberal legislation on foreigners has enabled us to take in by far the largest number of asylum-seekers - probably 400,000 this year; 220,000 refugees from Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina have found refuge in our country. We are the biggest attraction in Europe and in the world for the massive social migration from East to West and from South to North. In view of our still-high level of unemployment and our housing shortage, especially in the eastern part of the country, this places an exceptional burden on the population. This has to be appreciated if one is to make a fair judgement of our people's attitude towards foreigners.

In emphasizing this point I am not trying to tone it down. The hatred demonstrated and the terror perpetrated by a radical minority against asylum-seekers in our country brings disgrace on Germany. This I deeply regret, but let me add that this is not the attitude of the great majority of Germans towards other nationalities. In my country 6.3 million foreigners live harmoniously with their German neighbours. Year in, year out, the Germans demonstrate their solidarity with other nations through extensive

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relief campaigns, through their generous donations for the benefit of people in the former Soviet Union, and through their considerable aid for the Kurds and the starving people of Somalia.

Germany owes its unity to the dismantling of confrontation in Europe and to the trust we have gained through our European policy and through our not having pursued a national course. We derive from this a responsibility. We shall continue to give our full support to European unification and global cooperation based on partnership, especially within the United Nations. We shall use all our energy in favour of human rights and against oppression, in favour of global solidarity and against excessive nationalism. This is the essence of the foreign policy of the united Germany for which I stand.

Mr. KRAVCHANKA (Belarus) (interpretation from Russian): Allow me to congratulate you, Sir - the representative of Bulgaria, a State friendly to ours, and of a people so close to the people of Belarus in its spiritual and cultural traditions - on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session. By electing you, representatives have paid tribute to Bulgaria and have given expression to the respect that you enjoy in the international community. In the performance of your quite complex duties you may rely on all possible support from our delegation.

We should like to express our most sincere congratulations to the States that have become new Members of the United Nations. We regard their entry into the United Nations with great satisfaction since the accession of new States to membership in the Organization enriches the collective thinking of the international community with the wisdom of each one of them.

Happy indeed is a people that reaps the fruits of centuries of steady development - development in the context of stable statehood and within a

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national culture unclouded by oppression. But there is another fate as well - that of going through centuries before re-establishing one's own State, without allowing the light of one's culture to be extinguished, and finally achieving the long-awaited goal of sovereignty and independence. This too is happiness - a particular kind of happiness, a difficult happiness.

It is precisely the words "difficult happiness" that I would use to express the essence of the present mood and feelings experienced by my people. Yakub Kolas, one of the titans of the culture and national spirit of Belarus, in his poem "New Land", wrote with tremendous power concerning the everlasting dream of a poor peasant in Belarus about land that would belong only to him, where he would be the master, independent of the caprice of an alien will.

Belarus, one of the ancient centres of Slavdom, is a new land, a new country regained by its people. The goals of freedom, of the enjoyment of full ownership rights in one's own country and of liberation from oppression in all of its manifestations have nourished the historic will of our people for centuries and are now beginning to be fully realized.

A year ago, at the last session of the General Assembly, the delegation of Belarus, in its statement, outlined the programme of its priorities in the sphere of foreign policy: a series of diplomatic recognitions, the establishment of a commonwealth of sovereign States in place of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, non-nuclear status and neutrality for Belarus.

Today, in a brief review of the year, I should like to note with satisfaction that a great deal has been achieved. As we foresaw, the Commonwealth of Independent States - born at Viskuli, on the soil of Belarus -

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has been established in place of the USSR. More than 100 States of the world have recognized the Republic of Belarus, and we have established diplomatic relations with 60 of them. Our State has become a full and equal member of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE); it has joined the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, as well as other international financial institutions; and it is now the host country for an office of the United Nations and the United Nations Development Programme.

Tactical nuclear weapons have been completely withdrawn from Belarus. Having become a party to the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty and its Lisbon Protocol, Belarus has also committed itself to the withdrawal of strategic weapons over a period of seven years. Possibly the process will be completed even sooner. We have distanced ourselves from participation in military and military-political alliances and blocs. Everything achieved thus far has established for our State a primary foundation, a base from which we can advance further.

There are certain invisible threads that link the present and the past into a whole - the spiritual potential of culture as an element of political choice, of fateful decisions taken at stages of drastic transition in history. Having established the necessary basis for its statehood and foreign policy, Belarus today may be said metaphorically to be standing at a crossroads of history. The problem of choice, of orientation, is particularly consonant with the present transitional stage of our life. Which way and how will Belarus move? What values will feed the roots of its State tree? What do the near and the distant future hold for our people, which has suffered so much? I think that hardly anyone would dare to give categorical and

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unambiguous answers today to these and many other complex questions. We can only make certain long-term asumptions and, so far as the prognosis is concerned, state a number of ideas and principles relating to several spheres of our activities.

In the economic sphere, our point of reference is the Commonwealth of Independent States as a form of economic interaction.*

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* Mr. Kalpage (Sri Lanka), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mr. Kravchanka, Belarus)

Events have put to shame those sceptics who foretold the imminent and inevitable disintegration of the Commonwealth. Today it may indeed still remind us of a weak child, but a child who, in our opinion, is destined to stand firmly on his own feet. The Commonwealth - whatever its membership may be - will endure and stand because under present conditions it is a form of mutual economic survival. It is a form that has been forced on us but an inevitable one, without which it would be difficult to count on the formation of an East European economic market. It should be understood that the structure which is now being established by its members cannot instantly become the model of a developed, contemporary market. For 10 to 15 years we shall continue to stumble along a bumpy road, but gradually we shall move towards a state of market civilization which will ultimately enable us to raise seriously the question of integration into the European Community - the Common Market.

We are convinced that for a relatively long time to come there will be two economic formations in Europe - the European Community and what we might term the emerging East European economic community - which will develop parallel to each other and gradually move closer together. For Belarus it is not so much a civilised form of economic divorce as an opportunity for creating a new quality of life, for getting ready, together with the other States of the Commonwealth, to become part of an all-European market.

In other words, for us and, we hope, for a number of other States, the Commonwealth represents not isolation and economic autarky but rather a form of development, an inner transformation, whose fundamental essence and final goal is a new Europe. The idea of a common home for Europeans will become a reality only when the levels of economic development are equalized.

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At present we are still struggling to prevent our economic potential from declining too far. The specific characteristic of Belarus' approach to the reforms is that the dynamics of the establishment of the new market structures should and does fully match the fading away of the old economic structures. Such a harmonious approach enables us to avoid extremes: on the one hand, rushing forward without good reason and, on the other, rigidly clinging to what is outmoded. We are convinced that, having overcome its difficulties, the people of Belarus will realize its age-old dream, in the words of Yanka Kupala, "to become the equal of other peoples in glory and power".

In the political sphere we shall continue to act in strict conformity with the constitutional principles of a neutral and non-nuclear State. We perceive each of these not as a "given", not as a "moment of truth", but as a goal born in the depths of our national consciousness as we lived our tragic history.

We view the movement towards neutrality and non-nuclear status as a process of consolidating the independence and sovereignty of Belarus, acquiring our own political identity and breaking free of the traps that could in the future prevent our free and conscious integration into the structures objectively necessitated by world development.

We realize clearly that the notion of classical neutrality is undergoing a radical change of content. Perpetual neutrality does not and cannot exist in a Europe and a world which are interdependent, just as no perpetual-motion machine exists or can exist in nature. The steps recently taken by European countries that had been neutral on the basis of tradition or treaties are evidence of this.

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We, the people of Belarus, on the basis of our tragic past, have been and continue to have a romantic concept of neutrality. This has become simply a matter of national instinct. There have been so many attempts to annihilate us, so many attacks upon us, that we still have the feeling that if we become neutral, our security will be guaranteed.

But Belarus can become truly neutral only when the new Europe is free of blocs, when the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) ceases to exist just as the Warsaw Pact did in the recent past, when the freedom of movement of ideas, people, capital, goods and services becomes an everyday reality.

The third trend is democratic institutionalization. There is no doubt that our main hopes in this area are associated with the adoption of a new Constitution which will make the process of democratization irreversible. I believe that this may happen in the coming months in the course of the second reading of our draft Constitution, which is scheduled for October of this year. The draft Constitution includes the following fundamental values and principles: deideologization and political pluralism; primacy of the norms of international law; the separation of legislative, executive and judicial power, with reciprocal checks and balances between the three branches of State organization; the introduction of norms for direct action with respect to human rights, any potential violation of which would automatically cause the judicial bodies to intervene; the undertaking of a thorough and complex judicial reform aimed at reforming the civil code and the code of civil procedure, the code of labour law, the criminal code and the code of criminal procedure, and the establishment of trial by jury; the creation of a constitutional court; and strict observance of the rights of national minorities on the basis of the recommendations of the 1990 Copenhagen meeting of CSCE on the human dimension and the 1991 Charter of Paris.

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In this area, in keeping with our traditional principles of tolerance in all spheres, including the religious sphere, we intend to continue to maintain a high standard even under the conditions of a turbulent Europe. We take pride in the fact that all through the many centuries of our history, despite the Pale of Settlement, we have never had such extreme chauvinistic phenomena as anti-Jewish pogroms or any other similar actions on our national soil. Our firm principles - a genuine love of peace, respect for others, tolerance, honouring the right of each ethnic group, regardless of its size, to have its own national identity and equal civil rights - will be preserved and augmented by us in contemporary Europe.

This is demonstrated by the present-day situation in a multidenominational Belarus, where a religious minority, the Catholics of Belarus, has been granted the right to celebrate its main religious holidays as officially established non-working days. If I am not mistaken, this is one of a very few such examples in Europe.

It is our hope that the unique interfaith balance that has historically developed in Belarus will be valued and respected by all and will not become the subject of external manipulations. We in Belarus do not equate the religious denomination of the citizens of Belarus with the ethnic groups to which they belong.

To say that we are living in an extraordinary time is nowadays often merely to mouth a cliché. The time has come, however, to go both beyond mere declarations that changes have taken place and beyond simple-minded sentimentality at the sudden disappearance of earlier global tensions. It is true that the disintegration of the totalitarian system, both as a social and political system and as a system of States, has led to the actual disappearance

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of the central line of tension between the two opposing global military and ideological groups. One pattern of international relations, which characterized most of the twentieth century, is being or has been replaced by another. But this still does not automatically mean the absence of conflicts. Paradoxically, the new pattern is reminiscent of the one that was laid down by the Vienna Congress and characterized the Europe of the nineteenth century, especially its latter half, with its multitude of centres of power and the abundance of inter-State and intra-State conflicts, often ethnic in content. No doubt the analogy is not exact, but its points of resemblance give cause for concern, a concern actively reinforced by the bloody conflicts in Yugoslavia, Nagorny Karabakh, Georgia and Moldova, all of which seemed inconceivable to Europe just a few years ago. And after all, we all recall the catastrophic convulsions with which that international structure ended at the beginning of the twentieth century.

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The political structure adopted thereafter was that of post-Versailles Europe, which also proved counterproductive. The creation of subregional groupings, such as the Little Entente, and an amorphous system of pseudo-collective security eventually demonstrated the complete inability of the League of Nations to function and failed to save the world from the conflagration of the Second World War.

The situation today is similar in many respects. It is thought that unless urgent measures are taken, Europe will totally fail to approach complete prosperity and tranquillity. Internal tensions on the continent are increasing. A broader interpretation of CSCE is drawing it into new crises in the European-Asian area and making it more difficult to achieve any concrete results at the initial stage of emerging conflicts. Is it possible that we have not learned anything from the sad experiences of the past? It is true that the nuclear threat is receding, but the number of victims of conventional-arms conflicts is nevertheless terrifying.

I am far from being a prophet of doom. Moreover, achieving our common strategic goal - the creation of a unified European home - is a thoroughly realistic and attainable one. But we must not forget that the complications we face on the path I have just outlined are also real. We must see them clearly and overcome them in order to move forward through joint efforts towards our chosen goal.

The main advantages of the new world order over that of the last century, in our view, lie in mankind's accumulated bitter experience, which we must prevent from recurring, and in the existence of a functioning and universally respected Organization of States whose task it is to ensure international peace and security.

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It is important, however, to enable the United Nations, through our joint efforts, to play an active, practical role in preventing conflicts and "extinguishing" those that nevertheless arise.

At the present time it is both necessary and possible to strengthen the role of the United Nations in monitoring the compliance of States with their commitments under existing international covenants and conventions in the sphere of human rights. The issue of radically strengthening the role of the United Nations in this respect may become one of the items on the agenda of the World Conference on Human Rights, to be held at Vienna next year.

It is essential to prevent the world from being split into groups on the basis of different degrees of well-being. Closed "oases of prosperity" cannot exist forever; they make the world unstable. Today, as never before, it is necessary to mount a multifaceted attack on world-wide economic problems.

The removal of the threat of nuclear war and the growing burdens technology imposes on the global environment, which have reached and even exceeded the limit, have made clear the gravity of the problems that beset the environment. In this sphere too, the international community must choose not confrontation but cooperation in order to preserve the Earth's ecosystem.

Without idealizing the results of the Rio de Janeiro Conference, Belarus shares the view that this is only the beginning of a long and difficult road. Here, in addition to everything else, it should be borne in mind that on the moral scale of values, the modest offerings of the poor are often much more precious than the donations of the rich.

Belarus supports the idea of convening in 1995 - the year marking the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations - a special session of the General Assembly during which another summit meeting in the interests of the Earth would be held, for the first comprehensive review of the implementation of

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"Agenda 21", the agenda for the twenty-first century, and at which the Earth-95 Charter, which may be developed on the basis of the 1992 Rio Declaration, would be discussed.

We regard the unique summit meeting of the United Nations Security Council, held on 31 January of this year, as a milestone in preparing the United Nations for its role, which is totally new in its effectiveness. We highly commend the Secretary-General's report "An Agenda for Peace", and we are prepared to take part actively and as constructively as possible in discussing the recommendations put forward in that report.

I can, however, declare even today our favourable attitude towards enhancing the activities of the United Nations in carrying out peace-keeping operations and, in general, in settling conficts, many of which stem from inter-ethnic disputes. In particular, we are prepared to participate actively in the search for peaceful ways to resolve the Nagorny Karabakh conflict. We have agreed to hold an international conference at Minsk on this issue, and despite all our economic difficulties, we have done everything possible to enable it to begin its work.

On the whole, Belarus' reserves of stability, both internally and on our borders, its traditions of cultural and national tolerance, its aspirations to the strict observance of human rights and its geopolitical position give it, in our opinion, the potential to play an active role as a peace-keeping mediator or coordinator in a number of situations, particularly in regions of the former USSR but also in a broader context. We are ready to make use of that potential in the interests of peace, cooperation and genuine respect for human rights. As we see it, the realisation of this potential will be helped by another dimension in Belarus' foreign policy: our aspiration to balanced consistency, constructiveness and predictability of action.

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Speaking from this rostrum as the representative of a country that was stricken by the worst nuclear accident in human history and of a State going through an extremely difficult stage in its transition from one type of economy to another, I must express today our anxiety concerning two aspects of the General Assembly's activities.

The Republic of Belarus is troubled by the delay in the implementation of the General Assembly resolution on strengthening international cooperation and coordinating efforts to study, mitigate and minimize the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster - or, to be more precise, by the Assembly's almost total inactivity with regard to implementing that resolution. The ineffectiveness of the United Nations, about which much has already been said from this rostrum, can be vividly illustrated inter alia by this example, which is particularly close and painful to us. We have learned from our own experience that resolutions - in this particular case resolution 45/190, which was adopted by consensus and, I should point out, sponsored by 129 States - may be adopted, but the results of such seemingly active measures are minimal. The years that have elapsed since the disaster convince us that today we are essentially at the mercy of a capricious fate and must rely first of all on our own capabilities, on people of goodwill and on various international charitable and religious organizations, to which we are immeasurably grateful for their moral support and their assistance.

Even the small secretariat that was established to oversee the implementation of that resolution is silently watching events from far-away Vienna, clearly not intending to relocate to one of the three capitals of the affected countries, closer to the scene. Apparently this is a much simpler

(Mr. Kravchanka, Belarus)

and calmer way of proceeding. And what good would it do to try to take the Chernobyl issue outside of the United Nations, the United Nations General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council?

It is evident that policy relating to Chernobyl is becoming hostage to the current weaknesses and the inherent characteristics of the United Nations. Need we explain why, in the light of this situation, the prestige of such a universal Organization as the United Nations may be waning in the minds of many people in Belarus?

A number of United Nations administrative and budgetary policies also need to be seriously revised. First and foremost, the scale of assessments of the States Members of the United Nations deserves criticism.

(Mr. Kravchanka, Belarus)

Regrettably, in the course of its recent work the Committee on Contributions recommended to the General Assembly that the share contributed by the Republic of Belarus to the United Nations budget should be sharply and substantially increased. The state of our economy, especially during the transitional period, gives no grounds for such an increase. We wish to declare our profound disagreement with such an unjustified approach, and we insist that the amount of our Republic's contribution to the Organization's budget should be reconsidered. Furthermore, we are prepared to assume financial obligations, but, first and foremost, we are prepared to do so only in respect of financial obligations as from the time of the juridical disappearance of the USSR, that is to say, from December 1991.

The poetic metaphor of a crossroads, which is so dominant for Belarus today, involves another important symbolic feature, that of departing and leaving something behind. As it passes through the present difficult crossroads, Belarus leaves behind forever the obsolete ballast of implausible stereotypes that were imposed upon us, bound us hand and foot and prevented us from being free and happy. We look forward with confidence to the new horizons now opening, we are ready to work indefatigably for our homeland, to make the life of the people of Belarus prosperous and secure, and we shall continue to make our contribution to the world community's constructive efforts.

We are making our choice. We have made it already.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.